

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1736

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 0650

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP BC

SUBJ: TRAVEL OF PRESIDENT KHAMA TO RECEIVE HONORARY DEGREE
FROM HARVARD

1. SUMMARY: ON MARCH 7, PRESIDENT KHAMA'S OFFICE SHOWED US LETTER FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT BOK STATING THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO AWARD PRES KHAMA AN HONORARY DEGREE AT COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES JUNE 8, 1978. THE NOTICE OF AWARD IS TO REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL ANNOUNCED BY THE UNIVERSITY. PRESIDENT KHAMA'S OFFICE THEREFORE ASKED US TO INFORM PRESIDENT BOK'S OFFICE THAT PRESIDENT KHAMA ACCEPTS AND WILL BE ABLE TO BE PRESENT. WHILE IN THE US, KHAMA WOULD LIKE TO SPEND UP TO TWO DAYS IN WASHINGTON AND HAVE A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, SECRETARY VANCE AND SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) THAT DEPARTMENT INFORM HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT BOK THAT PRESIDENT KHAMA "WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO ACCEPT" HONORARY DEGREE AND WILL PLAN TO PERSONALLY RECEIVE THE AWARD SAT JUNE 8 COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES; (B) THAT DEPARTMENT SEEK A ONE-HOUR'S APPOINTMENT FOR PRESIDENT KHAMA WITH PRESIDENT CARTER BEFORE OR AFTER JUNE 8 CEREMONIES; (C) THAT DEPARTMENT COORDINATE OTHER REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS, I.E., WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, SECRETARY VANCE AND SFRC; AND (D) THAT DEPARTMENT LET THIS EMBASSY KNOW THE TIMING OF THE PROPOSED APPOINTMENTS TO ENABLE GOB TO MAKE SPECIFIC PLANS.

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END SUMMARY.

2. CABINET SECRETARY PHIL STEENKAMP ASKED ME TO CALL MARCH 7. UPON ARRIVAL HE HANDED ME A LETTER ADDRESSED TO PRESIDENT KHAMA FROM DEREK BOK, PRESIDENT OF HARVARD, STATING THE UNIVERSITY'S DECISION TO AWARD PRESIDENT KHAMA AN HONORARY DEGREE AT JUNE 8 COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES. LETTER STATES THAT DEGREE CAN

ONLY BE AWARDED IF PRESIDENT KHAMA CAN BE THERE IN PERSON TO RECEIVE IT AND ASKS THAT MATTER BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL ANNOUNCED BY THE UNIVERSITY. LETTER ASKS THAT NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE BE RECEIVED BY MARCH 15 AT THE LATEST.

3. STEENKAMP SAID PRESIDENT KHAMA "WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO ACCEPT" AND ASKED IF US WOULD SO REPLY TO PRESIDENT BOK'S OFFICE AND ADD THAT "A FORMAL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE" WILL BE MAILED MARCH 8. STEENKAMP WENT ON TO ASK WHETHER, IN VIEW OF PRESIDENT KHAMA'S PLANS TO BE IN THE US TO RECEIVE THE DEGREE, "OTHER MEETINGS" MIGHT BE ARRANGED. HE SPECIFICALLY ASKED WHETHER AN APPOINTMENT FOR "AN HOUR'S MEETING" MIGHT BE ARRANGED AT PRESIDENT CARTER'S CONVENIENCE EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER JUNE 8. STEENKAMP SAID KHAMA DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT OR EXPECT "OFFICIAL TREATMENT". WHAT HE WANTED WAS CHANCE TO MEET AND TALK WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND OTHER RANKING US OFFICIALS OVER PERHAPS TWO-DAY PERIOD.

4. I REPLIED I WOULD PROMPTLY RELAY HIS REQUEST FOR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. STEENKAMP SAID PRESIDENT KHAMA WOULD ALSO HOPE TO MEET WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, SECRETARY VANCE AND SFRC. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF KHAMA'S HEALTH, THEY WANT TO AVOID HEAVY SCHEDULE OF RECEPTIONS AND SIGHTSEEING. (PRESIDENT KHAMA LAST VISITED US IN JUNE 1976 WHEN HE MET WITH PRESIDENT FORD.) FYI: STEENKAMP SAID SPECIFICALLY THAT PRESIDENT KHAMA WANTS TO AVOID "BEING TAKEN IN TOW", AS AAI IS PRONE TO DO. END FYI. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. STEENKAMP EXPLAINED THAT SUBJECT OF KHAMA'S VISIT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED AT LENGTH AND EVERY EFFORT MADE TO ENABLE KHAMA TO GO DIRECTLY TO THE US FOLLOWING SCHEDULED FOUR-DAY STATE VISIT TO UK IN LATE MAY. HOWEVER, THIS HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE. THEREFORE, PRESIDENT KHAMA NOW PLANS TO RETURN FROM UK TO BOTSWANA BEFORE TRAVELING TO THE US FOR THE JUNE 8 COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES. HENCE THE FLEXIBILITY IN KHAMA'S PROGRAM AS PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATED, AND HIS ABILITY TO ARRANGE APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER JUNE 8.

6. ACTION REQUESTED:

A) THAT DEPARTMENT TELEPHONE HARVARD PRESIDENT BOK'S OFFICE BY COB MARCH 10 TO INFORM HIM THAT PRESIDENT KHAMA "WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO ACCEPT" HONORARY DEGREE AT JUNE 8, 1978 COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES;

B) THAT DEPARTMENT ADVISE HARVARD THAT KHAMA IS PLANNING TO BE PRESENT AND IS USING DEPARTMENT CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION TO HELP PRESERVE CONFIDENTIALITY AS REQUESTED;

C) THAT DEPARTMENT MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ARRANGE ONE-HOUR'S MEETING AT PRESIDENT CARTER'S CONVENIENCE, PREFERABLY JUNE 5, 6 AND 7, BUT POSSIBLY JUNE 9;

D) THAT DEPARTMENT COORDINATE KHAMA APPOINTMENTS WITH VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE, SECRETARY VANCE AND SFRC DURING ROUGHLY THE SAME PERIOD AS APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER, APPROPRIATELY SPACING THE MEETINGS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF FACT THAT KHAMA HAS A PACEMAKER, DIABETES AND RECORD OF TIRING EASILY;

E) LET THIS EMBASSY KNOW THE PREFERRED TIMING OF APPOINTMENTS SO WE CAN CONVEY THE INFORMATION TO PRESIDENT KHAMA'S OFFICE WHICH WILL PREPARE TRAVEL SCHEDULE.

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7. COMMENT: THE PROPOSED VISIT TO PRESIDENT KHAMA TO US AND POSSIBILITY OF MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER PRESENT UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT FOR THIS DEMOCRATIC, NON-RACIAL, HUMAN RIGHTS-RESPECTING REGIME. WE WILL PROVIDE SEPTEL BACKGROUND AND FURTHER RATIONALE IN SUPPORT OF THIS PROPOSED VISIT AND APPROPRIATE ACCOMPANYING PUBLICITY.
NORLAND

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